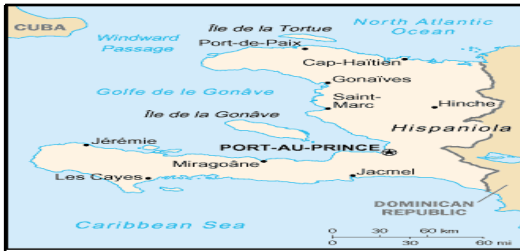


The HABETAC Newsletter

Haitian Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center @ Brooklyn College



HABETAC @ Brooklyn College
James Hall 3103J
2900 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11210
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Tele. (718) 951-4668
Fax (718) 951-4707

Nicole B. Rosefort
Director

Marie Lily Cerat
Resource Specialist

Jessie M. Cadeau,
Administrative Assistant

Professor Regine Latortue
Dean Deborah Shanley
Co-Principal Investigators

Advisory Committee Members

Nirva Baudin

Dr. Carole M. Berotte Joseph

Menes Dejoie

Dr. Beryl Dorsett

Humbert Emmanuel

Berthe Faustin

Dr. Henry Frank

Dr. Regine Latortue

Carlo Mitton

Dr. Jean Pierre Louis

Jean Previllon

Yolette Williams

Message From the Resource Specialist

Dear Colleagues;

A long time ago I decided to abstain from saying “never again,” life being so unpredictable. Therefore, returning to HABETAC did not seem unusual at all. In fact, my HABETAC experience never did end after I left the organization in 2001. I continued to attend events and even collaborated with the HABETAC Team on many different occasions.

Without trying to offer an explanation, many colleagues and friends knew there were multiple reasons for my departure: one was a burning desire to return to the classroom and put into practice all that I was learning as a Resource Specialist, the opportunity to implement some great innovative teaching ideas, and so on. Indeed, returning to the classroom to teach English and writing gave me the opportunity to help my seventh and eighth grade students at PS 181K to learn to appreciate great literature. A priceless experience!

In the three years that I spent there, my students and I created a school newsletter, an afternoon book club, and read some great books. My reading list always counted the play “A Raisin in the Sun” by Lorraine Hansberry. Imagine the pleasant surprise we had when it made its first comeback to Broadway in the Spring of 2004. To sweeten our excitement, our principal secured tickets for sixty students and chaperones to see the play. For my students, seeing the Hip Hop rapper and mogul, Sean “P. Diddy” Combs on stage, playing the character Walter Lee Younger was icing on the cake. We also read the Haitian writers Edwidge Danticat and Jaira Placide. Jaira Placide had visited the school and spent time with us discussing her novel, Fresh Girl.

My first year back at HABETAC is exciting. I am learning. Nicole Rosefort, the new director, is a seasoned educator and quite knowledgeable. Working with her, Jessie Cadeau, the administrative assistant, and the one and only Jean Previllon, now a consultant for HABETAC, and all the Haitian educators who attend our activities rewards me most. I am looking forward to working at HABETAC for years to come, but, I will not say that I would “never again” return to the classroom.

Best always to all my fellow educators,

Marie Lily Cerat

The Parent Gallery

Challenging Moments for Haitian Students and their Parents at P.S. 34Q

In Queens, a borough that has always boasted a huge Haitian population, neighbors heard angry voices of Haitian parents when it was said that a school administrator insulted their children.

Children and their parents recounted that Assistant Principal Nancy Miller of P.S. 34 ordered twelve or thirteen Bilingual Haitian Creole students to “sit on the floor and eat with your hands like animals, the way you are treated in your country.”

Members of several community organizations stood by the children and their families, marching and demonstrating over the discrimina-

tory practices against the Haitian students and calling for the removal of the current administration. They failed to understand why Ms. Miller was not removed from P.S. 34 during the investigation process. Joined by different community organizations, leaders from the Haitian Community and concerned individuals, several local politicians held two press conferences on the steps of City Hall, decrying the abuse and calling for the removal of the Assistant Principal and the Principal.

More than a month after the incident, the DOE investigators substantiated most of the charges against AP Miller. She has been removed from PS 34 and at present, her termination from the New York City School system is pending. Haitian community leaders and

parents have also asked for the removal of the principal, Ms. Shakespeare, and the parents have filed a law suit against the New York City Department of Education, citing the violation of their children’s civil rights. “Ms. Shakespeare’s failed leadership and her insensitive attitude created the environment for these kinds of situations to happen. This injustice happened under her watch,” said Ms. Ninaj Raoul, executive director of Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees.

“Racism and discrimination have no place in our society,” added Ms. Raoul.

The Language and Power of Myths: Unearthing Pandora’s Box

HABETAC continues to offer educators forum and workshop series to assist Haitian teachers to remain up-to-date with policies, regulations, have access to resources that enhance their instructional plans and provide them with innovative ideas and teaching practices. HABETAC always tries to make its professional development sessions relevant; and lessons and activities shared with teachers are easily duplicable in the classroom. One often heard comment in the field is that “theories are good, but practices better.” HABETAC’s learning and sharing sessions focus on tangible and reproducible practices that participants can immediately plug in.

One recent workshop held at Brooklyn College with a group of Bilingual and ESL Haitian Teachers delved into the realm of myths. Using an old, New York City Board of Education Haitian Creole publication titled, *Ann Li Kont ak Lejann*, “Let’s Read Folk Stories and Legends,” we revisited the Greek myth of Pandora and superimposed standards two of the Learning standards for

Native Language Arts, which states: *students will listen, speak, read and write in their native languages for literary response.*

To activate prior knowledge and motivate, we compiled a list of mythic expressions that are used in our language, such as “*Pa ban m panik*” Don’t panick me, and correlated them to the Greek god/goddess, character or situation they are attached to. We looked at different artistic renditions of the mythic figure Pandora through time. As we read the text, we used certain guiding questions that dealt with topics like the depictions of women in myths and other stories, and whether curiosity is a good or bad thing, we identify vocabulary words that would be new for the students and the choice of words in the story.

There were numerous opportunities to listen: as selected readers read and discussed events in the story; speak: making relevant points, giving opinions and sharing thoughts; write: penning a persuasive letter to Pandora to dissuade her from opening the box.

One activity that required concentration, cooperative learning, peer sharing was the construction of a small, origami box.

The directions were given, a demonstration done and models were passed around.

In addition to making the box, participants had to come up with three to five world and/or community problems that were to be sealed in their boxes. And, unlike Pandora, they vowed that their curiosity would not get the best of them.



Freebies and Great Materials for your Classroom

National Science Teachers Association

Free and exciting curriculum on Food Safety for Middle and High School teachers and their students. This curriculum is a collaborative work between the Food and Drug Administration and the National Science Teachers Association. The free kit includes a video and guide. To register and receive the free FDA/NSTA supplementary curriculum, go online to: www.nsta.org/fdacurriculum.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Teachers can receive a free Earth/Mars Poster from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Log on to the NASA website at: <http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/classroom/earthMarsForm.html>.

P&G School Programs

Procter and Gamble is offering free sample deodorants along with lesson plan on personal hygiene. The kit includes a video and a take home booklet to schools with fifth grade classes. Packets are available in English and Spanish and can be ordered for girls only or boys only. A coed version also exists. Materials will begin to be shipped in September. For more information, go online to: www.pgschoolprograms.com/always.asp

Crayola CLASSPACKS

U.S educators can register to receive a FREE Sample from Crayola® OverWriters Marker and access to special OverWriters Lesson. Register at Crayola.com to request your free sample. Crayola limits one sample per registered educator, while supplies last. It will take four to six weeks for the delivery of sample.

United States Geological Survey

The United States Geological Survey Center's web site has lots of interesting information and images for teachers and students. To learn about water, different landscapes and geography, check their site at: <http://usgs.gov/outreach/Outreach.html>. There are lesson plans, brochures, posters and lots of information about water. There are an array of maps, pictures, data, and so on.

REMINDER: Consult the New York State Education Website at: www.nysed.gov for information and materials on ELLS, such as the NYSESLAT the glossaries, and Standards Guides.

HABETAC's Career Day for Haitian High School Students

The April 15, 2005 Career Day that was held at Brooklyn College for Haitian High Schoolers was a great success. Over 300 students came and fifteen schools in all participated, coming as far away as Westbury in Long Island. Twenty five Haitian professionals from the fields of Engineering to Journalism joined the students. The six hour day began with a College Fair where the students met with representatives from these schools and inquired about scholarships, programs and services. The day continued, filled with speakers. The leitmotif of all the talks was the same: "You Can Do It. You Can Achieve. Believe in Yourself."

Following the plenary session



Florence Marc-Charles (RN), Director of Visiting Nurse Services speaking with Students at Health and Medicine Workshop

and lunch, students met in career cluster workshops with the professionals to discuss preparation for the specific career interest. Their questions ranged from current hiring trend in the chosen field, to salary,

and so on.

Similarly to the majority of the youngsters, most presenters were not born in the United States and some even came as adults. They too were English Language Learners who had to overcome numerous hardships, but never allowed discouragement to enter their vocabulary.

Several community organizations were also present. Students found internships, mentoring, college preparation programs and many other extracurricular activities within these community-based organizations.

Please send your contributions, comments, and questions to newsletter:
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Telephone (718) 951-4668 Fax (718) 951-4909 or
Email: habetac@brooklyn.cuny.edu

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HABETAC Congratulates You!
HABETAC Di Konpliman Pou Ou!

Menes Dejoie, Bilingual Haitian Creole Psychologist
Recipient of New York SABE 2005 Support Person of the Year

Brooklyn College Graduating Haitian American Seniors

Natacha Bernard, Vice President
Haitian American Students Association
Chris Bissainthe, Former President
Haitian American Students Association

Winners of Haitian Spelling Bee Competition

Grades 3 & 4 First Place: **Widmael Darius**, PS 189K Second Place: **Ernsue Cayo**, PS 34Q
Grades 5 & 6: First Place: **Victoria Thomas**, PS 189K Second Place: **Giovanna Darius**, PS 189K
Grades 7 & 8: First Place: **Kimberly Bastien**, PS 189 Second Place: **Guerceley Manigat**, PS 189

Winners of Haitian Poetry and Essay Contest

Ania Pierre Louis, First Price for Essay Clara Barton High School
Marie S. Lexine, First Price for Poetry John Dewey High School